



State of Utah  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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April 18, 2003

TO: Minerals File

FROM: Paul Baker, Senior Reclamation Biologist *PAB*

RE: Site Inspection, Uintah County and Crown Asphalt Corporation, Asphalt Ridge Mine, M/047/022 and M/047/032, Uintah County, Utah

Date of Inspection: April 11, 2003  
Time of Inspection: 9:30 to about 11:30 a.m.  
Conditions: Mostly clear, 70's  
Participants: Kim McDonald and Paul Felch (Uintah County), Lee Farber and Bill Kraemer (Crown Asphalt Ridge), Doug Jensen and Paul Baker (DOGM)

**Purpose of Inspection:**

Crown Asphalt Ridge has prepared a new map of the disturbance areas, and we wanted to discuss the map with the operators and possibly compare it with existing disturbances. This map was done in response to requests from the Division for updated information that could be used to escalate the bonds. There is an area that has been reclaimed, and we wanted to see if it would be possible to release it. Also, some maintenance was done on drainage control structures last fall, and we wanted to inspect them.

**Getting to the site:**

The mine is on Asphalt Ridge on the west side of Vernal.

**Observations:**

We first looked at a flare stack built north of the processing plant (Photo 1). This was apparently not anticipated in the original designs and is not included in the bond.

The reclaimed area is adjacent to a small, bermed holding pond just west of the road that defines the east boundary of the site. Perennial vegetation in this area was primarily rubber rabbitbrush with some Indian ricegrass. There were a lot of weeds, mostly tumble mustard and cheatgrass. We compared this to a nearby undisturbed area where there was a little more rabbitbrush but where much of the rabbitbrush had died. Cover from perennial vegetation appeared to be a little less in the reclaimed area than the undisturbed area, but it was clearly more than 70 percent of the cover in the undisturbed area.

The operators have done most of the maintenance on the drainage control structures that we discussed last fall. Photo 2 shows a pond that would now capture any drainage coming out of this portion of the mine. Photo 3 shows a berm across the drainage below the pond in Photo 2, and this berm

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and the ditch below it would capture all drainage coming from above this point. The ditch has been cleaned.

Last fall, the county had planned to install a culvert under the road on the east side of the mine, but there was some discussion about where it should be placed. It was going to run north-south to allow all water running along the west side of the road to go into a small bermed pond at the bottom of the reclaimed area discussed above. Instead, the county intends to put it farther north along this road and allow drainage to flow into a natural drainage on the east side of the road. Although the culvert has not yet been installed, the new pipe was lying right next to the road.

The county had planned to put in a check dam in the asphalt processing area, but we were told this had not been done.

#### **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

The county needs to install the culvert and check dam.

Last fall's inspection was done in response to a concern from Lyle McKeachnie that runoff from the mine could flood a housing development that has been built in a drainage below the mine. With the maintenance that has been done, all runoff from this drainage is now diverted into ponds of some sort. Although it is possible these ponds and drainage control structures could fail in an extremely intense storm, I don't believe it is likely. Mr. Felch said the plans for the housing development indicate a retention pond is supposed to be built below the mine, and this should provide additional protection.

The operators are in the process of revising some of the maps, and the Division has also requested updates for the bond. The Division can release the reclaimed areas we examined, but these areas should be delineated on permit area maps. The Division also needs to know how many acres are being released from each permit (separately).

The map we examined would answer most of the questions the Division has raised recently about acreage figures and should also clarify the requirements for bonding. The operators need to submit this map for the Division's review. The area impacted by the flare stack and the flare stack facility will need to be included in the bond.

Crown Asphalt Corporation and Crown Asphalt Ridge, LLC, have not yet responded to deficiencies in the transfer application. This needs to be resubmitted.

jb

cc: Jay Mealey, Crown Asphalt Corporation  
Dan O'Leary, Crown Asphalt Ridge, LLC  
Paul Felch, Uintah County  
Will Stokes, SITLA

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**ATTACHMENT**

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**Photographs**

**M/047/022 and M/047/032, Asphalt Ridge Mine, Uintah County and Crown Asphalt Corporation**



**Photo 1. The flare stacks.**



**Photo 3. A berm was placed across the road and an adjacent drainage (not in photo) to divert water to the ditch in the center of this picture.**



**Photo 2. Retention pond in the mine area.**